15 OCT 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Estimated Imminence of a Chinese Nuclear Test

1. This memorandum is for your information.

2. In a Special National Intelligence Estimate issued in August 1964 it was concluded that, on balance, a Chinese nuclear test probably would not occur before the end of 1964. At that time available information indicated that the Chinese nuclear test site near Lop Nor was under active construction and could be ready for a nuclear test by about October 1964. On the other hand, continuing construction in September 1963 at the only known Chinese plutonium production site indicated a probable startup of the reactor at that site in early 1964. This in turn indicated a date around mid-1965 for first availability of sufficient plutonium for a nuclear test. Although neither the possibility of an earlier startup of this plant nor the existence of an unidentified plutonium production facility could be wholly discounted, it was felt unlikely that plutonium would be available in 1964. [redacted]

3. [redacted] The high priority apparently given to the

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SUBJECT: Estimated Imminence of a Chinese Nuclear Test

completion of site construction suggests that a test is scheduled in the fairly near future since it would not be desirable to establish the parameters of an initial nuclear experiment much in advance of the test.

4. [redacted]

5. [redacted]

6. We no longer believe that evidence on plutonium availability justifies the on-balance judgment reached in August 1964. We believe the Lop Nor evidence indicates that a test could occur at any time. In any case we believe a test will occur sometime within the next six to eight months.

[redacted]
Assistant Director
Scientific Intelligence

(b)(1)
(b)(3)
(S)

Attachment (1)
Indications Relating to a Chinese
Nuclear Test in the Near Future

CONCURRENCE:*

[redacted]
Deputy Director for Science & Technology

15 Oct
Date

* A memo to holders of the Estimate is planned for next week.

Indications Relating to a Chinese Communist Nuclear Test in the Near Future

1. In addition to the evidence on the physical preparations of the test site, the following items are pertinent to the question of the imminence of a Chinese Communist nuclear test:

a. [redacted]

b. [redacted]

(b)(1)
(b)(3)
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c. Statements made by various Soviets who should have knowledge of the status of the Chinese program, at least as of the time Soviet aid was withdrawn in mid-1960, are consistent with an early test. [redacted]

d. The Chinese have recently contacted various African and Asian countries concerning Chinese plans for a nuclear test in the near future.

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[redacted]

e. [redacted]

(b)(1)
(b)(3
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2. The principal argument against an early nuclear test is the fact that we have no conclusive evidence that sufficient fissionable material for a test is available at the present time.

a. [redacted]

b. [redacted]

c. [redacted]

(b)(1)
(b)(3)
(S)

TOP SECRET

15 OCT 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: The Chinese Atomic Energy Program

1. This memorandum is for your information.

2. The Chinese Communists have an atomic energy program directed at the production of nuclear weapons at the earliest possible date. Facilities for almost all phases of the program, from basic research through nuclear testing, have been identified.

3. Basic research is being conducted in laboratories of the Institute of Atomic Energy of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. [redacted]

4. Uranium for the Chinese atomic energy program is being obtained from domestic sources; the principal ones are located in the Tien Shan Mountains of Sinkiang and in the Weng Yuan area of Southeastern China. [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3) (S)

The Chinese apparently have sufficient ore reserves and uranium production capacity to permit the development of more than just a token nuclear program.

5. [redacted]

TOP SECRET

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SUBJECT: The Chinese Atomic Energy Program

[redacted]

6. [redacted]

7. [redacted]

8. [redacted]

(b)(1)
(b)(3)
(S)

SUBJECT: The Chinese Atomic Energy Program

9. [redacted]

[redacted]
Assistant Director
Scientific Intelligence

(b)(1)
(b)(3)
(S)

CONCURRENCE:

[redacted]
Deputy Director for Science and Technology

1 Dec 64
Date